Building a Successful Interdisciplinary Team—Learning to Love Conflict (TH314)

Jennifer Kapo, MD, Yale University, New Haven, CT
Susan Crawford, MSW, Yale University, New Haven, CT
Jane Jeuland, MDiv BCC, Yale University, New Haven, CT
Leslie Blatt, MSN APRN, Yale University, New Haven, CT

Objectives

- Describe models of conflict resolution styles and reflect about one’s own typical approach to conflict resolution.
- Identify how one’s own personal conflict resolution style may lead to pitfalls in communication with team members who may have different approaches to conflict resolution.
- Identify reasons for, and potential sources of, conflict among members of an interdisciplinary team.

Building a strong integrated team requires careful planning, commitment, and constant nurturing. This session will explore the development of a new palliative care interdisciplinary team, including the challenges and opportunities the team faced as it expanded. An effective, coordinated team must have an efficient mechanism for exchange of information. At the minimum, it requires space and a regular time to meet to share ideas and learn from each other. Given the team members’ mixture of skills and professional backgrounds, interdisciplinary collaboration is complex. A diversity of views and differences of opinion are inevitable. Conflict is both necessary and desirable in order for the team to grow and improve. Our team made a commitment to seek formal team training in order to solidify and strengthen our collaboration. During this session we will share what we learned, including writing a program mission statement, defining team core values, identifying our own personal conflict resolution style using validated instruments, and exploring strategies to effectively address conflict using Kerry Patterson’s “Crucial Conversations Model” as a guide. We will discuss the benefits of conflict on an interdisciplinary team by using cases that illustrate how conflict can encourage innovation, the acquisition of new knowledge, and creative problem solving. Practical conflict resolution skills will be applied to common disagreements among members of interdisciplinary teams, and session participants will be encouraged to strategize ways to apply these skills to the interdisciplinary teams with whom they work. By the end of this session, participants will be able to describe how successful confrontation and resolution of differences engender increased trust and understanding between team members, and they will create an action plan to address interdisciplinary team conflict within their own teams.